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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000397

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS  
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY  
NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [NE](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS LAUNCH MAJOR ATTACK AGAINST  
SECURITY FORCES IN EASTERN NEPAL

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski for reasons 1.5 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. At about 2200 hours on March 2, the Maoists launched their first large scale attack against security force personnel since the end of the cease-fire in August 2003. The attack was focused on the district headquarters of Bhojpur District, located in the eastern hills of Nepal (approximately 300 miles east of Kathmandu). Details are still forthcoming; however, initial reports indicate that the Bhojpur District Administration Office (local government office), Nepal Commercial Bank and the repeater station tower of the Nepal Telecommunications Corporation were destroyed. The destruction of the telephone repeater station has made communication with the area difficult.

[1](#)2. (SBU) At about 2200 hours on March 2, the Maoist launched their first large-scale attack against security force personnel since the end of the cease-fire on August 27, [1](#)2003. The attack lasted until about 0400 hours on March 3. According to military sources, about 700 Maoists staged an attack around the vicinity of Bhojpur, located in the eastern hills (approximately 300 miles east of Kathmandu). Initial news reports indicated that the Bhojpur District Administration Office (the local government office), Nepal Commercial Bank and the repeater station of the Nepal Telecommunication Corporation were destroyed.

[1](#)4. (C) According to military sources, the Maoists were unsuccessful in looting the bank's deposits because the money is secured each evening on the army barracks. Military sources stated that the attack concentrated on the police and army barracks, the bank and the telephone repeater station and that the Maoists completely destroyed the telephone repeater station and the bank during the attack. The destruction of the telephone tower has inhibited the flow of information; over six hours after the attack, the details of the attack are still coming in. A reliable source reported that he intercepted radio communications between "high-level Maoists commanders" this morning, which indicated that the Maoist leadership was putting strong emphasis on making the attack successful.

[1](#)5. (C) Initial reports from military sources indicate that about 11 Royal Nepal Army personnel and 17 police personnel were killed in action and about 15 security personnel were critically wounded. About 20 Maoists are believed to have been killed during the attack. Sources also indicate that about 16-17 Indian Small Arms Systems (INSAS) assault rifles were taken by the Maoists. Military sources also report that RNA Rangers reinforcements have been deployed to the area.

[1](#)6. (C) COMMENT. The last Maoist attack of this scale on a district headquarters occurred in November 2002. Initial reports from the attack appear to paint a large-scale, all out Maoist attempt to regain their momentum and refurbish their public image by proving they can still score a significant victory. According to military and intelligence sources, this attack in the eastern region has been expected for about two weeks. The Ambassador and Defense Attache will travel to the RNA Eastern Division Headquarters on March 4 and will obtain additional details as they become available.

MALINOWSKI